

CLAIMS

1. A method for decontaminating the necks of thermo-
plastic preforms intended for making into containers by
5 a blow molding or stretch-blow molding procedure,
characterized in that, as the preforms are fed one
after the other into a container manufacturing unit,
the preforms pass first through an upstream chamber
into which a decontaminating liquid is sprayed
10 continuously so as to maintain in this chamber a fog
atmosphere of said decontaminating product with which
the necks of the preforms are brought into contact, and
then pass in front of ultraviolet lamps arranged so as
to completely irradiate the necks of the preforms
15 wetted by the decontaminating product for at least a
minimum predetermined period of time, before reaching a
device that loads them into the manufacturing unit.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, characterized in
20 that the fog is kept flowing through so as to
facilitate its renewal.

3. The method as claimed in claim 1 or 2,
characterized in that the decontaminating product is
25 hydrogen peroxide H_2O_2 .

4. An installation for the decontamination while they
are moving of the necks (4a) of preforms (4) delivered
one after the other to a loading device (6), said
30 preforms (4) being made of thermoplastic and being
intended for making into containers by blow molding or
stretch-blow molding, said decontamination installation
being structurally and functionally connected to a
preform feeder installation (A) comprising means for
35 moving the preforms (4) one after the other,
said decontamination installation comprising ultra-
violet lamps (7) arranged so that the ultraviolet
radiation completely irradiates the necks (4a) of the
moving preforms (4),

characterized in that the decontamination installation also includes, upstream of the ultraviolet lamps (7), a chamber (10) traversed by said preform movement means of the feeder installation (A) and in which means (14)
5 are provided for spraying a decontaminating product in such a way as to maintain a fog of the decontaminating product inside said chamber.

5. The installation as claimed in claim 4,
10 characterized in that the spray means (14) comprise at least two spray nozzles (15) arranged one on either side of the preform movement means and above these, with their respective axes (19) aimed roughly in the direction of the necks (4a) of the moving preforms (4).

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6. The installation as claimed in claim 4 or 5, characterized in that suction means (20) are connected to the chamber (10) in order to create a flow through the latter such as to prevent local accumulations of
20 product in suspension.

7. The installation as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 6, characterized in that inside the chamber (10), the preform movement means are surmounted, above the
25 necks (4a) of the preforms, by a rod (23) of relatively small transverse dimension relative to the diameter of the necks, this rod forming a member that prevents the preforms being lifted up but allows access by the fog of decontaminating product to the inside wall of the
30 necks of the preforms.

8. The installation as claimed in any one of claims 4 to 7, characterized in that the preform movement means comprise an inclined slideway (5) down which the
35 preforms (4) slide by gravity one after the other and in that this slideway (5) passes through the chamber (10).